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come to one's funeral is particularly potent—and the transactions of the *eddīr* are strictly governed by elected officers.[39]

Equb.—The *equb* is a form of savings association in which weekly or monthly payments of a fixed sum are exchanged for the privilege of receiving a large lump sum at some point in the life of the group. In addition to providing a means of forced saving, the *equb* offers a basis for sociability when the members come together to make their payments and are provided with food and drink. Like the *eddīr*, the *equb* is believed to have originated among the Gurage, and acquired wider popularity following the Italian invasion when many people needed large sums of money for rebuilding homes and purchasing livestock. The mode of operation of an *equb* has been described in the *Ethiopian Observer* as follows:

> A person desiring to start an Iqub will discuss the matter with his friends; if they agree a meeting will be called to discuss the rules and regulations of the proposed new society, and in particular the amount of money to be paid by each member, the frequency of payment and the time and place of meeting. A president, or dagna [literally, "judge"], and a money collector will be elected from among the most respected and reliable members of the group.
>
> The President then asks every member to bring one or two guarantors who will be responsible for payment in case of default for whatever reason it may be.
>
> On the appointed day all the members assemble and the secretary will call the roll. Any member unable to attend is expected to send his subscription in time. The specified sum is then handed by every member (or substitute) to the President. Any latecomer will be fined according to a pre-arranged schedule, this money being kept by the President until the end of the Iqub, when it is used for the common enjoyment of the members. The collected funds are drawn by lot, the winner receiving the total subscription of all the members. The lottery is normally effected by the members writing their names on small pieces of paper which are then placed in a hat, a blind-folded non-member then drawing out the name of the winner.
>
> After each draw, the winner is disqualified from taking part in further lotteries, but continues to pay his fee until every member has drawn his share. If he fails in this duty his guarantors have to pay.
>
> When all at length have been rewarded the time has come to set up a new Iqub.[40]

Equb have been established by members of virtually all low- and middle-income groups—clerks, merchants, servants, peasants, policemen. Their rapid increase, in response to the growing importance of money in Ethiopia's econ-

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omy during the past two decades, represents a significant growth of the capacity for voluntary formal organization in the modernizing sector.[41]

Māhebar (*Regional Associations*).—A type of formal association which has sprung up in Addis Ababa in recent years, becoming popular for the first time around 1960, is known as the *māhebar*. While its name is taken from the traditional Orthodox fraternal association, in aims and organization it is different from the religious *māhebar*. While the latter is devoted to honoring one of the saints and is convened primarily for feasting and sociability, the modern *māhebar* is organized on the basis of territorial or tribal bonds and is concerned with problems of social betterment. The first *māhebar* of this kind was established by the Gurage in the fifties.* Thereafter, the idea spread to members of other groups, and Addis Ababa residents originating in Gondar, Tigre, Harar, Manz, Tagulat, Fitche and elsewhere began to form *māhebar* of their own. The basic idea behind all these *māhebar* is to make some contribution to the welfare of the provinces through projects voluntarily financed and organized by fellow-countrymen living in the metropolis. These projects have included construction of roads, schools, and hospitals; supplying books for schools; and provision of facilities for assisting inhabitants of the provinces who come to the city. Members of the various *māhebar* convene weekly or biweekly, usually on Sunday in the vicinity of one or another of the Addis Ababa churches, to discuss their projects and make their financial contributions.

Formal Associations of Foreign Inspiration

Student Associations.—The Orthodox Students Association was founded in 1958 by a convention representing all the colleges and some of the secondary schools. Its successful establishment was due in large part to the efforts of an Indian Orthodox minister who at the time was one of the Emperor's private secretaries. There is some evidence that an earlier spontaneous effort to form such a group in the early fifties was checked by the government. Members of this association have been concerned with adapting the activities of the church to contemporary needs. They criticize the established church for its use of a dead language, excessive ritualism, and lack of teaching; and have proposed that the Orthodox Church should institute Sunday schools and

* The Gurage *māhebar* remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the *māhebar* form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented *māhebar* concerned solely with building a road from Alam Gana to Wollamo Soddo, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage. This association has already collected well over a million dollars, and has completed the construction of a bridge. It is headed by a capable Gurage army general and its activities and collections are reported regularly in the Addis Ababa press.

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journal, but also an engineers' association, a college teachers' association, and an Ethiopian writers' association. Earlier attempts to establish an organization of lawyers have not yet reached fruition.

National and International Service Organizations.—A final group of formal associations consists of those which include non-Ethiopian nationals as well as Ethiopians in their membership and which carry out welfare services of various sorts. The Ethiopian Red Cross, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the YMCA, and the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa have been active for more than a decade. More recently, the International Christian Fellowship was formed with an eye to discussing ways of translating Christian principles into social action, and the Social Service Society has broken new ground in the welfare field with its ambitious program of relocating and rehabilitating Addis Ababa indigents.

Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *māhebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *eddīr* and the *equb*. The labor

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The labor movement, limited as it is, has been in the hands of Eritreans on the one hand, and primarily non-Amhara workers in the south. Student associations have been formed chiefly at the instigation and under the aegis of foreign staff members; though here, as with the professional associations, modernized Amhara have sometimes played a leading role.

Once the new associations had been introduced, the Amhara like other Ethiopians were quick to adopt and expand them. Their participation in these new associations, however, has been affected, as might be expected, by the intrusion of traditional behavior patterns. Three examples of such behavior patterns come readily to mind.

(1) While the *equb* is conceived as a kind of credit union and as a focus for communal sociability, the *co-operative* sentiment tends to be lacking among members of Amhara *equb*, at least those of which the author has any knowledge. For example, in case of dire need, an *equb* member who desires the lump sum out of turn may be forced to *buy* the amount from the weekly winner, sometimes by forfeiting as much as ten or twenty per cent of the amount. By capitalizing on the crises of others, some enterprising *equb* members are able to sell their successful claims several times. Furthermore, in the early years of their existence, *equb* were frequently faced with the problem created by members who won the money early in the cycle, left town with the money, and did not return to pay their later installments. This difficulty has been met to some extent by the requirement of securing one or two guarantors for each person who enters an *equb*, but problems of this nature have led to altercations that have brought many *equb* members into court.

(2) The behavior of members of Amhara territorial *māhebar* is essentially that of a traditional social or civil gathering. The big men are seated in places of honor; the rest of the people stand quietly by. After a protracted period of exchanging greetings and milling about, the crowd listens respectfully while one or more of the big men makes a statement, and perhaps exchanges a few words with the group's secretary; and then the gathering disbands. Although the *māhebar* is organized with respect to the attainment of specific goals, the substance of the meetings is instumental to a very slight degree. The assembly rarely involves a meeting of minds to discuss an issue or a common problem, or to work out a program of action; but exists primarily as an occasion for the resonance of primordial sentiments by virtue of shared territorial attachments.

(3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether.* They

* The *equb* has attempted to check this pattern by imposing fines on members who come late.